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REMARKS

Applicant's counsel hereby expresses their thanks to Examiner Johnson for his courtesies and helpfulness during an interview held on June 13, 2006.

As indicated in the Interview Summary, Examiner Johnson stated that, with regard to the rejection based upon the Watanabe patent, "if the claimed invention were shown to give better results, consideration would be given to dropping the rejection."

Applicant's invention, e.g., claims 1 and 13, and claims depending therefrom, includes limitations defining an oxygen absorber comprising (1) an iron powder, and (2) "a first layer coated on a surface of the iron powder, said first layer being formed of iron chloride." The Watanabe patent discloses a sachet, or packet 10, which includes a mixture of iron powder with any of a combination of materials (column 7, lines 34 to column 8, line 4.) In the Office action of December 14, 2005, in paragraph 2, the Examiner acknowledges that "Watanabe fails to disclose a coated first layer." Accordingly, it is agreed that applicant's claimed invention is novel.

In applicant's compound, the layer of iron chloride makes the iron powder active. In Watanabe, the mixture of iron powder and metal halide makes the powder active only at the point of contact between the iron powder and the particle of metal halide, only so long as the adjacent particles are in contact with each other, and even then on a comparatively minuscule area of contact as compared to applicant's claimed invention that the layer of iron chloride is coated on the surface of the iron powder.

Applicant's invention is disclosed as including the feature of mixing the coated iron powder into a matrix for

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forming containers and the like. Using applicant's product of claim 1, it is clear that the layer of iron chloride coated upon the iron powder maintains intimate contact therebetween to maintain the active nature of the oxygen absorber. This would not occur if the material of Watanabe is mixed, e.g., with a plastic material. It is submitted that at least a large portion of the metal halide would become separated from the iron powder thereby substantially reducing the active nature of the product for absorbing oxygen. Thus, it is readily apparent that separated particles in Watanabe would not perform to the level of applicant's iron particles that are coated with a layer of iron chloride.

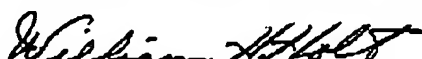
Further, it is submitted that additional materials introduced into the packet 10 of Watanabe, as is contemplated at column 7, lines 38+, would further separate the particles of iron powder from the metal halide particles thereby further reducing the activity of the mixture for functioning as an oxygen absorber. Conversely, applicant's iron chloride retains its integrity with the iron powder.

The various dependent claims must be considered in the context that they include the limitations of their parent claims, namely, that the iron powder is provided with a coated layer of iron chloride. Therefore, applicant submits that the novelty of the parent claims is included in the dependent claims and allowance is believed to be in order.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration is requested and allowance of claims 1-14, 16 and 19, along with allowed claims 17 and 18 is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

June 14, 2006


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